---== ST REPORT INTERNATIONAL ONLINE MAGAZINE ==---
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"The Original 16/32bit Online Magazine"

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ST REPORT INTERNATIONAL ONLINE MAGAZINE
The _Number One_ Online Magazine
-* FEATURING *-
"UP-TO-DATE News and Information"
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Hardware - Software - Corporate - R & D - Imports

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STReport's support BBS, NODE 350, invites BBS systems, worldwide, to participate in the Fido/F-Net Mail Network. Or, call Node 350 direct at 904-786-4176, and enjoy the excitement of exchanging information relative to the Atari ST computer arena through an excellent International ST Mail Network. All registered F-NET - Crossnet SysOps are welcome to join the STReport Crossnet Conference. The Crossnet Conference Code is #34813, and the "Lead Node" is # 350. All systems are welcome and invited to actively participate. Support Atari Computers; Join Today!

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WHAT'S NEW IN THE ATARI FORUMS (January 10)

"HIDDEN" TREASURES IN ATARI PRODUCTIVITY FORUM (GO ATARIPRO)

DO YOU HAVE THIS FILE? TURBO BOARD ST BBS. A shareware fullfeatured BBS system for your Atari ST. Features Doors, Crossnet message bases, and FNET bases. Compatible with Binkley Term, Fido, Fidodooor, and Fido Mailer.

File: TURBO1.LZH in Library 2 ("Telecommunications").

DO YOU HAVE THIS FILE? RUNNER SEMI-REPLACEMENT DESKTOP. Runner allows you to create your own menu, supports user-definable background pictures, and operates in all three resolution modes!

File: RUNNER.ARC in Library 4 ("Utilities").

DO YOU HAVE THIS FILE? The Church Treasurer - a complete software package deceoped to take care of your record-keeping needs. Fully configurable, this program promotes efficient and friendly data entry and supports numerous screen and hardcopy options. Many fun-to-use features included.

File: TREASU.ARC in Library 5 ("Applications").

DO YOU HAVE THIS FILE? CDBASE - an easy-to-use compact disk cataloging database. It presents your collection using a graphic format and allows you to view, edit, search and print lists.

File: CDBASE.ARC in Library 5 ("Applications").

THE ATARI PORTFOLIO FORUM ON COMPUSERVE
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OFFICIAL SUPPORT SITE BY ATARI CORPORATION

"GO APORTFOLIO TO ACCESS THE ATARI PORTFOLIO FORUM"

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> The FUTURE? STR FOCUS Was 1991 "The Year of Atari"?
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DARKEST BEFORE THE DAWN - ONE MAN'S OPINION

By Lloyd E. Pulley, Sr.
Senior Staff Editor

Was 1991 "The Year of Atari"? I am going to shock many of you and say, "Yes!". I realize that some of you are probably scratching your heads and saying to yourselves, "Someone must have spiked Lloyd's Christmas' eggnog with wood alcohol because his brain is obviously warped."

There's little doubt that the ST market in the US is probably at an all time low. We have fewer dealers than at the start of the year...and we did not have many to start with. Developers leaving and/or considering leaving the ST market. People, in droves, selling their ST's and moving onto other systems. Few systems getting into new owners hands. I could go on, but you already know the story.

How can this be "The Year of Atari"? Have you ever heard the phrase, "It is darkest before the dawn"? The year 1991 was the dark time, 1992 and 1993 will be the dawn of the new Atari.

I don't consider the statement "The Year of Atari" to mean that this was the year that Atari sold the most systems, or the year that Big Blue and Apple started looking over their shoulders worrying about Atari catching up with them. I consider the statement to mean, this was the year that Atari finally re-discovered the US market and started doing something to re-gain it.

To show you what I mean, let's take a quick look at some of the things that did happened this year. These are in no particular order, just as they pop into my head and I'm sure that I'll forget something (and I'm equally sure I'll hear about the ones that I forget <grin>).

1) Brought out the 520STe. With the price point of the 520STe, the mass-market companies can now be competitive when selling Atari products. This means more systems in the homes.

2) The MegaSTe received its class B certification and got into all the dealers showrooms. With the 16mhz mode, internal hard drive, and TOS 2.05 included, it resurrects the "Power Without the Price" slogan.

3) The TT was slightly re-vamped and also got its class B certifica-

tion. While the class B TT's aren't available yet, they _are_ on the way.

4) Discontinued the STacy. While a great machine, the STacy did have its shortcomings.

5) Announced two new portable ST's. One is a notebook system, the ST Book, the other is a touch sensitive pad, the STylus. Both of which have created a lot of interest in and out of the Atari market-place. Both are 'sure winners' once they are released.

6) Finally came out with two long awaited software bundles for the STe line, the "Discovery Xtra" and "Family Curriculum". These bundles might not be impressive to us 'old time' ST users, but for a new computer owner, they're a great perceived value and should help sell a lot of new systems.

7) A 1.44 floppy retrofit package is in the works. With the new 'Ajax' chip and an AUTO folder program, many of the current systems will be able install and use the new 1.44 floppy drives. Some of the current TT's are coming out with the 1.44 floppy drives already installed.

8) Atari introduced TOS 2.06. Not only is TOS 2.06 an upgrade for the MegaSTe's, it has also been designed to work in the STe's. But this isn't all. Atari worked hand-in-glove with a German firm and the new TOS 2.06 can be also used in many of the older ST/Mega's (with the new Artifex board carried by CodeHead Software). This means that many of older systems will no longer be 'obsolete', we will be able to upgrade our systems with most of the same features that the new systems have.

9) FSM GDOS is finally shipping with WordflairII!!!

10) Atari is finally doing something with CLIPBOARD standard and is working with developers to include it in all new programs (if you've ever used a Mac, you'll know how handy it is for programs to be able to 'talk' to each other).

11) Atari System V (UNIX) was introduced this year. This will bring the TT into the UNIX world in a big way and open up a whole new computing world to us.

12) Introduced AEGIS for their quality dealers. Atari gives the AEGIS dealers seminars and help in promoting Atari products.

13) Atari started supporting distributors again. They realized that the users needed more sources of product until Atari can re-build their dealer network. With distributors, the small dealers can be competitive.

14) Made an impressive showing at Seybol and other top-end DTP shows. These shows lead to great write-ups in professional DTP publications and helps give Atari credibility as a 'professional system'.

15) Re-affirmed its commitment to the MIDI market. Keyboard magazine has a contest this year that's giving away a full-blown Atari TT/ Midi system.

16) Releasing MetaDOS to third-party developers. We should be seeing some CD-ROM drives available in the US for the ST RSN.

17) Is taking more of a 'personal' interest in the larger user-group shows. Instead of just sending 2-3 representatives and a couple of

door-prizes, Atari now is getting fully involved. The Chicago show was just the first of these combined Atari/User-Group shows.

18) As of Novemeber 1, 1991, all Atari hardware now carries a full 1-year warranty.

19) Warranties on new machines will be extended to one year.

20) Proposed - Working with GE so that GE service centers will be able to handle Atari warranty work.

I could continue but I believe you're getting the general idea. I didn't even include any of the non-ST products like the Lynx II, the three new PC clones, etc. Nor did I get into the 'rumored' new systems that we've heard Atari is working on. Also, I didn't include 'tidbits' like CompUSA (a chain of 24+ stores) now carrying the Portfolio and talking to Atari about also carrying the STe/Family Pak line.

Does this sound like a company that is "on its last legs"? Not to me!! A company that is "on its last legs" doesn't invest the type of money, time and personnel that all of the above have required. To me, it sounds like a company that has finally discovered America. To me, it sounds like a company that has decided to work with its third-party developers, user groups and users. To me, it sounds like a company that has hit bottom but has enough guts to fight its way back up. To me, this is the year that Atari finally found itself...THE YEAR OF ATARI.

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GEnie Announcements (FREE)

1. December '91 GEnie Billing Complete - To Review Yours, Type:.*BILL

 2. AMIGA owners, new graphics are here. Let's play..............TRIVIA
 3. NEW: The Mac Help Desk gives you real-time answers... see....MAC
 4. My boss at GEnie said YES - FREE night of Disney RTC Trivia..FLORIDA
 5. Turbo Vision Tutorial RTC on January 12......................BORLAND
 6. Make a New Year's Resolution to pay for your education.......CASHE
 7. Germanic genealogy updated resource..........................GENEALOGY
 8. New Categories for Sequent, NeXT, Coherent, and Sun..........UNIX
 9. If it is WEIRD, we have it in................................PSI-NET
10. Everything you wanted to know about..........................ASTROLOGY
11. Get to Know Lands' End: Order a Catalog Today................LANDSEND
12. Visit the GEnie Info Library today...........................*LIBRARY
13. Post-holiday AUDIO/VIDEO system HELP in......................*RADIO
14. Find cool stories and hot recommended downloads in...........*LIVEWIRE
15. Hacking SUPER NINTENDO on the................................PSRT

Coming January 14th, the beginning of Lexicor's Virtual Cinematography and Graphic Art classes. The classes will begin at 10pm Eastern in room 5. The first class will be FREE. You will NOT be charged for your time attending this first class

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GREG PRATT RESIGNS AS GENERAL MANAGER OF ATARI USA!

This announcement was made by Atari's Bill Rehbock during the regular Wednesday night Realtime Conference. Download PRATT.ARC (file #22232) for a transcript of the conference.

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ATARI/NAMM REALTIME CONFERENCE -- JANUARY 15, 1992

Join us at 10:00 pm Eastern for a special RTC with Atari's main MIDI man, James Grunke. James will be coming to us from the NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) Show where Atari USA will be exhibiting their wares to music professionals.

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> GEnie Conference STR Spotlight   G. PRATT LEAVES ATARI!

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January 8, 1992

<[Sysop] JEFF.W>
Bill Rehbock has a special announcement to share with us.

<[Bill@Atari] B.REHBOCK>
Thank you, Jeff.

Ahem... I have an official announcement to make. I will take a few questions afterward.

Greg Pratt has taken a job with Creative Labs, the company that produces "Sound Blaser Pro".

Everything is under control.

It was an offer that he could not refuse. It is a very amicable parting, and we at Atari will be keeping in close touch with him. Don Mandell will continue to supervise the sales organization. The consolidation of the U.S. accounting with corporate (same as it was in 1985) had been planned with the assistance of Greg; marketing is being handled by James Grunke, Art Morgan, and myself (working directly under Sam Tramiel, as we have been). It will work out quite well, and we wish the best of luck to Greg.

A complete press release will be uploaded by the end of the week.

(For those who aren't aware, Greg was the General Manager of Atari U.S.)

<[Sysop] JEFF.W>
If anyone has any questions for Bill about this announcement, please type /RAI to let me know.

<[John Cole] J.COLE18>
Bill, I really dont know how to take this news!

Since I am a User Group President, and currently trying to put together a new Dealership, I would like to know how this will effect our application and availabilty of prouduct to the US?

<[Bill@Atari] B.REHBOCK>
I assure you that it will not affect anything at all. We are in the process of interviewing people for developer support and marketing positions right now, building for a big 1992.

There definitely shouldn't be any product shortage problems, and there will be no problem signing up new dealerships. Don and Mike Groh have everything quite together on the sales side of things.

<NEVIN-S>
Hello Bill. This is very sad news...

I wondered if Atari will be looking for a new person to fill Greg's position, or if it will be filled by one of the Tramiels?

<[Bill@Atari] B.REHBOCK>
This actually had been planned for a little while now. We don't intend to replace him in the foreseeable future.

I guess our leaks are just stopped up better lately :-)

(Job 14)<NEVIN-S>
Thanks, Bill. No other questions.

<R.GRIFFITH10>
Why does the TT High density drive format disks that aren't made for high density (no second notch) is there no checking mechanism? or is it just my system?

<[Bill@Atari] B.REHBOCK>
Well, this was supposed to pertain to Greg’s departure but... just this one. :-)

I don’t believe it is just your system. Atari owners are generally intelligent and know if the disk they are formatting is HD or not. If they wish to attempt to format disks at 11 sectors per track, with 82 tracks, we don’t want to get in their way. :-)

Actually, I am pretty sure that the original design of the floppy stuff did not allow for the HD detect line. I could be mistaken, but I’m fairly sure that is the case.

<[What amazes] A.BAIER>
Why do people vanish as soon as something good starts to happen at ATARI? There must be brighter lights over the horizon.. I am not surprised at all..Greg has been doing some noticebly great things CEPS..Chicago Show..I guess that others in the computer industry recognize and reward greatness.

)<[Bill@Atari] B.REHBOCK>
The design of the marketing strategy build-up of 1991 was done by James Grunke, Art Morgan, and myself, under the blessing of Sam and Greg. I assure you that we are still here and these things are going to continue in a big way.

You will be seeing more advertising following the initial Music things that are happening, and Atari will become more visible in general as the year goes on.

<[Baaad Dot] D.A.BRUMLEVE>
Greg Pratt gave such a cute speech in Chicago. Will any of the promises and plans he discussed now become null and void? And if you are not going to replace him, who will give the next such speech?

<[Bill@Atari] B.REHBOCK>
The promises are happening, nothing is null & void. Depending on the issues being covered, I assure you that James, I, or Bob will always be in close contact with the users.

(James and I do a pretty good stand-up act :-)

<[JCD] MAG.SOFTWARE>
I’d first like to extend best wishes to Greg from all of us here at Magnum Technologies (formerly Magnum Software).

I think all of us here would like to know what type of advertising Atari plans to do this year. I have yet to see a TV commercial or hear a radio spot for Atari computers.

<[Bill@Atari] B.REHBOCK>
The majority of advertising will be print ad. We are considering putting together TV spots that would be placed locally, but I doubt that they would be launched before the fall buying season. We are finishing the first of the print stuff right now, and I hope to see it myself quite soon.

<[Brian] B.GOCKLEY>
Since Greg was theoretically pinch hitting for Alwin/Elie, it seems odd

that little, if any, progress been made up till now on finding someone to relieve him?

I would think that Atari could really use someone powerful and dynamic at the helm (to match the sterling workers in the trenches) to work under/with/against/around the Tramiels. Or is the GM position just a figurehead? (And is there anyplace special we should keep an eye on where Atari will get more visible?)

<[Bill@Atari] B.REHBOCK>
As I have said, the progress that had been made _was_ a team effort - big time!

<[Jim] KC-IN-2000>
What do you mean by a big 1992 and where should we expect to see print ads?

<[Bill@Atari] B.REHBOCK>
The placement schedule is not finished being worked out yet. It will be where you'd expect them. (Music, DTP, etc.) <DOUG.W> It's been noted many times that the success of the non-U.S. subsidiaries is largely due to their "distance" from the Tramiels.

Based on these observations, won't this "combining" of Atari Corp. and Atari U.S. be detrimental to the success of Atari U.S.?

(BTW, I would *expect* print ads in Time, Business Week, Scientific American, etc.)

<[Bill@Atari] B.REHBOCK>
In 1985, when Atari had their big wind-up, U.S. & Corporate _were_ run as one. There were far fewer communication problems than there had been after they were separated. Phones and faxes make subsidiares suprising close! All product allocation, etc. for the world has always been done from here, so that has not been their biggest advantage.

(suprisingly)

<OFFY>
What Atari products will be addressed in these print ads? Is it Atari's hope to bring about increased hardware sales and software productivity to the U.S.? Finally, will these print ads be directed toward any new markets?

<[Bill@Atari] B.REHBOCK>
Yes, and yes.

<[Bill@Atari] B.REHBOCK>
Our definite intent will be to attract new users. Both from other platforms and those new to the computer buying market. (Education may play a large role also, dependent on how software accelerates.)

Thank you very much for your time, as I have said, this is not a big deal for us, and the plans and systems are in place (as are the plan-makers:-). Have a good evening!

<[Sysop] JEFF.W>
Please wish Greg Pratt success and good health in his new position. He's made a lot of friends in his tenure at Atari and he will be missed.

<[Bill@Atari] B.REHBOCK>
Thank you!

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> The Flip Side STR Feature
"....a different viewpoint"
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A LITTLE OF THIS, A LITTLE OF THAT

by Michael Lee

From John Eidsvoog (CodeHead Software) - Cat. 32, Topic 23, Msg. 184 - from the ST Roundtable on Genie...

Well it's past December 31st and Avant Vector EPS is still not available. Since the product has been unavailable for the past two months, it doesn't seem fair to allow an introductory price to expire. We're going to extend the deadline for the introductory price until March 1, 1992!!

We do expect Avant Vector EPS version to be available within a week or two <sigh>. To clarify the current state of affairs with Avant Vector:

o Avant Vector EPS will replace Avant Vector. The original version will no longer be available.

o Avant Vector EPS will list for $545.00.

o Avant Vector EPS will be available for the introductory price of $495.00 until March 1, 1992. (direct from CodeHead only)

o Upgrades from the original Avant Vector (purchased from us) to Avant Vector EPS are $50.

We are still undecided about whether to carry Avant Trace. We'd have to price it at $195.00 list and it will only auto-trace, without allowing any editing. But as we use Avant Vector more and more, it becomes apparent that it does such a fantastic job that most traces require virtually no editing. Perhaps it would be worth it to carry Avant Trace. We invite your comments regarding this.

About FastTech's 030 board - Cat. 4, Topic 11, Msgs 92 & 93 - from the

ST Roundtable on Genie...

Question by Gregg Anderson...

Ok Jim, I gotta ask <grin>. Exactly why is your 030 adapter board so much faster than a stock TT? Both are running the same CPU, both have fast RAM available, and both are using what's basically the same version of TOS....What did you do?

Answer by Jim Allen (Fast Tech)...

Gregg, the T030 is faster because it addresses more of the "problem". The problem being to go fast ;-)

The cache-only version speeds up both program execution and video performance equally, including when used with video cards. The speedup overall is in the 5X to 6X range.

The 32bit ram version doesn't have "fast ram" it has 32bit ST ram, which replaces the ram in your system. Everything the cpu does, is now done in 32bit ram, including your video.

These are important points, because the TT's design leaves video in ST compatible ram that is still operating at the same speed that all out ST's ram operates. This ram is TWICE as wide...32bits...but is the same speed as normal ST ram. So the best you can get is 2X in raw video performance. This limits just how fast the TT can be overall when running typical DTP and CAD software.

So doing real world tests on the TT versus the T030...or even the T25...will show that the TT's limited ST ram speed slows the system down overall. All the TT really needed was a small cache, like the T030's, to enhance the ST ram speed but this possibility has been eliminated due to mechanical issues in the TT's layout.

Another place where the T030 surpasses the TT is in floating point performance, because we use a much faster FPU chip and interface. So the T030 has twice the FPU performance of the TT.

The net result is that Dynacadd screams on a Turbo030 ;-)

More info about the AJAX chip from Bill Rehbock (Atari) - Cat. 14, Topic 4, Msg. 59 - from the ST Roundtable on Genie...

AJAX itself is capable of 2.88. It does require a little bit more support circuitry and higher clock rates. 2.88 megs is _not_ plug and play in the TT or MegaSTE. 2.88 Meg floppy drives are not being announced for the TT or MegaSTE by Atari.

From R.BROWN30's - CAT. 18, Topic 22, Msg. 141 - from the ST Roundtable on Genie...

...Recently, I spent four months in California doing some production work (I'm a filmmaker), and I lugged my Mega 4, Syquest, etc. with me to use whilst I braved both mountain and studio.

Each day I sat there working on my ST with a 33 mhz 386 PC not two feet from me with a professional developer at that DOS keyboard...

Spell that U-N-I-M-P-R-E-S-S-E-D.

For example: by the time the PC could actually boot to the Norton Desktop for Windows (a far-far cry from Neodesk or the new STe/TT TOS), even with a maths coprocessor - the PC had lost more time than it could _ever_ make up in an average session, say, with it running Lotus and my lowly ST running LDW Power.

And with this example, try loading a BIG (!) spreadsheet into Lotus in the PC environment: welcome to "OUT OF MEMORY" problems, even with ’extended’ or ’expanded’ memory of ANY size. A gigabyte, say.

Pathetic is a word that comes to mind.

Has it been so long that we’ve forgot that DOS seems not much more than a retread of its ’grandfather’, CP/M? Yes, the syntax on that dandy command line has changed...

IBM, DOS, and this ilk have also spawned this "TREMENDOUS and FABULOUS" surfeit of software. Name the significant titles amongst that horde. Get a handful? Ever notice the countless assortment of subset/inferior titles that apparently exist to give options to underacheivers?

What’s more, are we disregarding the DOS options available for the ST itself (386 available _right now_...)? Furthermore, there _are_ CLI’s available for the ST that brings a "virtual DOS" environment where the power of the ST can be temporarily stripped and the cludgy command line introduced with its attendant, inefficient command set:

cd H:\DIMWITT.ED\OPERATIN.G\SYSTEM*.YUK, or ’DOS’ for short.

And the Mac! So complex that it needs System 7 with "Bubble Help" that adds (for example) the awesome capability of being able to drag a data file on top of its program’s icon to have the program run and load the given data file in one fell swoop? Try it in Neodesk on your Atari.

What about those high power platforms on the Mac? Ever try transporting files amongst similar platforms, say something simple like Freehand to Illustrator?

Both may save an EPS file, but... Ah! The fabulous _third party_ developer, Altsys, will let you buy a $90 program, EPS Exchange, to get those files moving. Best be running Multifinder, I suppose.

Of course, significant primary Mac "education" is possible on an ST running Gadget’s Spectre GCR. Maybe not the high end color (-yet-), but certainly a lot of Word, Superpaint, Illustrator, Freehand, Fontographer, Photoshop, Digital Darkroom, Quark and PageMaker (combine the two and get Atari’s PageStream from SoftLogik), and a lot more. Work done on the ST in Mac mode can easily be taken to the office Mac on floppy disk.

And being one that works in Mac mode (and on the real thing), what about that Mac OS? World’s worst file selection scheme, a quagmire that in itself slows down the user not unlike the "slow boot" of the

PC.

Granted, these other platforms offer certain advantages, but, and especially in light of the new progress being shown at Atari (put a finger on the pulse of the new rumors...), now is not the time to either give up on Atari nor be a doomsayer.

Spectacular ST/TT-specific software is now coming of age, including titles like Avant Vektor, Cranach Studio, Calamus SL, Retouche Professional, and others that are equivalent to or surpass _any_ software in either the Mac or DOS environments.

The Atari combines the graphic environment and purported ’ease of use’ of the Mac with the logical file handling of DOS in a package that neither the IBM nor Mac can surpass save for a few proprietary applications - and that may be just a matter of time.

From Steve Gold - Cat. 14, Topic 19, Msg. 79 - from the ST Roundtable on Genie...

From what I have been told, subject to someone at Atari correcting me. All computers received by dealers after Dec. 1st, 1991 have a 1 year warrenty, except for Portfolio.

From Paul Wu (Omnimon Peripherals - OPI) - Cat. 4, Topic 31, Msg. 67 - from the ST Roundtable on Genie...

*******Announcement*******

We are now selling the new Omnix3 switch box which is an improved version of the video controller that we have been bundling with the OMNIMON monitor. The Omnix3 has a standard 15pin VGA output connector so it will work with ALL true "multi-sync" (not multi-scan) monitors. Please don’t confuse our product with other cheap imitations. Most of our competitors use mechanical switches to channel video signals to the monitor and suffers greatlly in monochrome clarity. Our Omnix switch box uses state-of-the-art digital circuit that is carefully designed to give you the best monochrome video signal possible on a color monitor as witnessed by our own Omnimon Rainbow monitor.

The switch box carries a suggested retail price of $99. For more information, please contact OPI at 714-753-9253

From Paul Wu (OPI) - Cat. 4, Topic 34, Msg 191 - from the ST Roundtable on Genie...

A little clarification here [concerning confusion about the Omnix and the Omniswitch]...

Omnimon Peripherals Inc. sells a video switch called Omnix.

Talon (now defunct) sold a switch called the Omniswitch.

The two switch boxes do the same thing but the design is entirely different. Most of our competitors use mechanical switches to channel video signals to the monitor and suffers greatlly in monochrome

clarity. Our Omnix switch box uses state-of-the-art digital circuit that is carefully designed to give you the best monochrome video signal possible on a color monitor as witnessed by our own Omnimon Rainbow monitor.

We were in the market first (since Glendale Atarifest in 1987) so please don’t confuse our product with others cheap imitations.

For your information, we are now shipping the new Omnix3 switch box which has a standard 15pin VGA connector so it will work with ALL true "multi-sync" (not multi-scan) monitors. The suggested retail on the switch box is $99. For more information, please contact OPI at 714-753-9253

Brought to you by the folks who designed OMNIMON, DEKA, and OmniChrome!!!

From Paul Wu (OPI) - Cat. 4, Topic 34, Msgs. 190 & 191 - from the ST Roundtable on Genie...

[Concerning complaints about the quality of a ACER monitor]...I think you may have a defective monitor or a bad connection in the switch box. The secret to a good picture is not entirely dependent on the monitor. A good switch box is just as important. Some of the switch-boxes on the market today are very poorly manufactured. When they are packaged with a decent monitor, they ruin the monitor’s repuatation because people perceive the low picture quality as the monitor’s fault when the switch box is the main culprit. Why is the switch box so important? The switch box routs the proper video signal to the monitor and is suppose to give an optimal balance of the color information. When it is poorly designed, noise-ratio is decreases, cross-talk occurs, and ghosting happens.

As an aside. Acer is one of the top 10 PC manufacturers in the world. Talon was a distributor of Acer. Acer America is located in San Jose, California.

From John Hayden - Cat. 5, Topic 10, Msg. 50 - from the ST Roundtable on Genie...

Here is a little review on Migraph OCR.

I just want you to know that it is very powerful and it works great with the TT in fast RAM. It comes with support for English, French, German and Dutch languages.

There is no worry what scanner it can support because it can translate any IMG or TIFF text file into an ASCII file or you can use the Migraph hand scanner directly! You can change the order of columns and merge them into one file as long you want it to be because Migraph OCR support hard drive caching just like Word Perfect. You can save graphics and ASCII text files on the same page.

It support proportional and monospaced text with different kerning as long the letters do not touch each other. This Migraph OCR uses a Omnifont engine that uses a mathematical system that has a greater

chance to recognizing letters even though it may not have been trained on them. This save a lot of hard disk space over systems that uses raster images of the letters.

Migraph OCR has already been pretrained on; Artisan, Bookman, Brougham, Caroll Pica, Courier, Courier Italic, Delegate, Elite Modern, Helvetica, Herald Elite, Letter Gothic, Lori, Lubalin, OCRB, Pica, Prestige Elite, Prestige Italic, Prestige Pica, Times, Titan and Title. It will also work on NLQ dot matrix printouts. The Migraph OCR uses an interactive learning system which makes it easy to add a new font! It is one of the most stable programs I have had the pleasure to use and that is base on the version 1.01. Migraph is one of the fastest companies to fix some of the bugs in the previous versions. The manual is 58 pages long.

Until next week.....

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> Delphi Conference STR Spotlight   PIRACY STILL HURTS!
  ===============================

This is a transcript of a formal Conference held Tuesday, January 7th, 1992. The focus of the Conference was software piracy, and its ramifications on the Atari community.

.Gordie (ST Advantage sysop) >
Well, as an introductory statement, let me say that the ST community is faced with a double dilemma. The two problems we face are a diminished market, which we won't go into tonight, and the stigma of the Atarian as rampant pirate. That one, we will discuss.

I think, however, that most of us remaining in the ST community have grown in awareness as to just how piracy affects us, and don't involve ourselves as we once might have. I will admit to having pirated software, in my earlier years, and now, in retrospect, see what it cost me. There are very, very, few North American software companies that still support our platform. Some have moved their ST development overseas, where there is a bigger market. But with the small market (relative to the PC and Mac ones), we are hit even harder by what casual copying that does go on.

Atari made a statement once upon a time about piracy...

They said there were 3 levels of it. The most severe was the software counterfeiters, who take a program and essentially make a carbon-copy of it, selling it as if it were the real thing. That isn't a problem with the ST, as the market isn't large enough to support that level of

involvement.

The next level was that of the pirate bbs rings. That still goes on, and there is a distinct sociological pattern that exists within that subculture. Hopefully, we'll talk a little about that tonight, too.

The last level, and probably the most destructive level, was that of casual copying. We're all familiar with it if we have been in a user group. One person gets a program, and passes copies along for their friends to 'evaluate'. Most people don't see it as being wrong, somehow, but it most definitely is.

That attitude has probably caused the most harm to the ST market of any held by Atari users. The idea that your use of something, without compensating the author, is somehow not hurting the author. Well, it does. And it hurts us all, in the end.

That's what I want to talk about tonight, and we have some people here who can hopefully shed a little insight into the whole thing. So, I'll open the floor for questions or comments. Anyone?

.AP7>
We need to be vigilant, but not vigilantes, righteous, but not self righteous, and be willing to "Call a spade a spade", so to speak. One function I want to personally get involved in is opening the closets so to speak, and cleaning house. Getting rid of the bats, if you will. A fundamental function of my proposed conference will be to literally teach, not only with programmers helping each other, but spreading understanding of what is involved in software production, the headaches and mindbending, if you will.

.Gordie>
AP7, education is most definitely what we need to do. If people don't know it's wrong, they won't stop doing it.

.AP7>
Education is a foundation from which behavior becomes possible. Behavior is learned, and many pirates simply know nothing about ethics. Sometimes it is that simple.

.Hippie>
How bad is piracy really... I see it more as the reason I can't run game from the hard drive due to pirates. ga

.Gordie>
This is where I wish Charles was here. He told me some interesting things about CodeHead products. They got more advance orders for the TEC board, which can't be pirated at all, than they've sold of any of their software products. That may indicate a significant piracy problem. And maybe not. Anyone have a comment?

.GRM (Gordon R. Meyer, a developer) >
Yes, another factor in that fact that many games can't be run from the hard drive is that it seems most companies develop for the minimal setup, a 520 or 1040ST at most. They might hesitate to spend any additional development or "support" for more advanced systems. ga

.Gordie>
Especially when ST sales are so abysmal. Some companies, however, do make their software HD installable. Quentin, you want to comment?

MICROPROSE (represented by Quentin Chaney) >
Hi Everyone... Our ST products are now developed by our UK office where HD's are basically non-existent. And as such now that they are developing mainly for the European community do not see the need, whether correct or not, for HD installable software for the Atari. ga

.Gordie>
That makes sense, Quentin. You have to develop for where the money is found. Simple business. John, you had a comment earlier?

PENDZICH>
How much software sales are really lost due to the pirates? Those who are into copying also copy movies, music etc. and would not buy any software if they could not copy it. ga

.Gordie>
Do any of you developers want to take a shot at this one?

.CodeHead (represented by Charles F. Johnson) >
That's one of those issues that's really impossible to quantize. Common sense tells us, though, that if the majority of the users can simply download something for free from a BBS, or get it from a friend, then it must affect sales at SOME point. ga

DABRUMLEVE (Dorothy A. Brumleve, a developer) >
Even people on tight budgets seem to come up with the cash for hardware. I'll bet they'd buy software too, if a free option weren't available.

.Gordie>
A lot of people managed to put together the bucks for the Happy enhancement. Probably more than the value of the software they copied with it.

.Dana STReport Editor>
I'd really like to know a couple of things What can be, and what is being done to put a dent in the problem. There are two problems... Lack of education, and pirate bulletin boards. We need to really educate people, not just cry about the problem. And I hate to sound like a vigillante, but pirate boards need to be eradicated to the point that people will be afraid to operate them. Comments?

PENDZICH>
Ma Bell may soon take care of BBS's entirely.

MICROPROSE>
It amazes me that I usually receive, through various BBS's and Customer Service, many messages about Pirate BBS boards with the comment always mentioning that " They paid for the game and they do not like the idea of someone else getting it for free." Although there are that many ST BBS's that I've come across, they do exist and in MicroProse's case we always try contacting the party and ask nicely for them to remove our software. 99 times out of 100 this works with no problems later down the line. The ones who act the "Pirate" are then turned over to the FBI and SPA... a last resort on our part. Rusty's and Edie's was a main problem for a while, but after being contacted by the FBI, quickly cleaned up their boards for all formats. Sometimes scare tactics are the only thing that do work, but most people just do it for the thrill of being a Pirate, I believe. ga

.AP7>
Education can work both ways. Action must be utilized, too. If the pirates can learn so much that they can, with impunity, copy anything and have their own BBS networks, why cannot we learn about it and STOP SELLING OR RENTING TO THEM! I can tell you two local names now that, if they were on a Blacklist, there'd be a big dent in Piracy. SPA is a joke, IMHO.

Or, simply put, if the honorable among us really decide to dig our heels in, we can make a difference! ga

.Gordie>
For those of us in the ST community, the SPA isn't probably our best course of action.

.GRM>
Dave Small had a very interesting article or two in Current Notes a number of years ago regarding an unamed ST developer or two who had taken to releasing fake pirated software. This software would take revenge (somehow, use your imagination) on pirates. I seem to recall that Small rejected that approach as being unethical, but it is a _very_ interesting idea. As for the SPA, as part of my research on the Computer Underground I've tried, as a user, to contact them regarding pirate boards. They were less than interested, sadly to say, and the words "atari" never entered into our conversation. GA

.Gordie>
I had that feeling. We are one of the 'Other Computers' in their lists.

.Dana STReport Editor>
Well, I can understand that sugar is better, but people just aren't likely to stop if there's no fear involved. If there's any possibility of losing their systems, etc., they will be more likely to cease. If the SPA isn't the right "agency", can one be formed in the Atari community, or is there one already?

.Gordie>
I wonder if some pressure can be placed on the phone companies. They are deriving income from the calls, after all.

.Dana STReport Editor>
I don't think so, Gordie, unless the phone company AND FBI are involved together.

DABRUMLEVE>
Actually, when you hear about a pirate board going down, it's often because they had files on phone freaking and such. The phone company has friends in police organizations.

.Gordie>
If the phone companies were formally made aware that illegal activity was being conducted on their lines, wouldn't they share in the responsibility?

.Dana STReport Editor>
yes

.Gordie>

That may be the approach that needs to be taken.

.GRM>
I'm not a lawyer, but for the most part the main legal interest is civil, not criminal. When it comes to toll fraud, such as phreaking, the Secret Service is the agency it would fall under and they are having a hard enough time going after hackers, which are perceived as a threat, let alone pirates, which are not really considered "dangerous". ga

.CodeHead>
That's right, Gordon...official agencies only get interested when the dollars get large. I guess that's when it's "dangerous" enough for them.

.GRM>
Right Charles, unless you can convincly argue that "national defense" is at stake when it comes to piracy. Then they'd be interested.

.AP7>
We need people at a local level that will keep their eyes open and Speak Out.

.Gordie>
A Neighborhood Watch kind of thing?

.AP7>
I tried that, and practically was ostracized by the local Club.

.Gordie>
Sad.

.AP7>
Yes, Gordie, but we need Developers that will Do something, even if only write a letter on a company letterhead. Would you developers consider each writing one letter on your own letterheads. To a certain major Pirate locally, and informing him he has NO upgrade support anymore?

DABRUMLEVE>
I would write, but my software is rarely found on pirate boards.

.AP7>
That is not the point, WE ALL NEED TO WORK TOGETHER!!!

DABRUMLEVE>
Besides that, upgrade support isn't necessary for the board-runner. He can just get a new upload from one of his users.

.AP7>
We all gotta be in like glue, and sticky as honey, and tough. Pirates do not want to know that you know. Publicity is one thing they do not want or need.

DABRUMLEVE>
I think there's the ethical question about non-support of a valid user. If the guy has BOUGHT the program legitimately, we should follow through on support.

.Gordie>

True, if someone pays for the upgrade, they should get the upgrade.
Now, if it were encoded with a tag, it might be interesting.

.GRM>
I agree with Dorothy, otherwise "lack of support" can become just one more justification for not paying for software in the first place.

.AP7>
Every program should be encrypted with the owners name, like NeoDesk.

DABRUMLEVE>
Nearly all software is encoded and can be traced. It's what you do with the info when you get it.

PENDZICH>
I've been Co-sysop on 5 boards since 80 and have had to delete (c) software from time to time. Almost always, they have included files that give names and phone numbers of bbs's etc. Why is this not evidence to prosecute? ga

.Dana STReport Editor>
Anyone can "doctor" a text file, that's why.

.Gordie>
True, we've seen it happen before.

.Dana STReport Editor>
Download listings, messages, etc. are essentially only a "clue". You need to literally check the system and find the stuff there.

.GRM>
My question of the developers here is this, have you found, to the extent that you care to let us know, that encoding the owners name in your products is effective? How so? Keeping honest people honest, or actually tracking illegal copies? GA

PENDZICH>
Just reminded me that at the last users group someone stole my floppy out of my system and got my "registered UIS and Quick ST" what are my recourses. Should I contact the publishers? ga

.AP7>
Yes!!

.Dana STReport Editor>
What do the developers recommend, that we as users, do to help?

.CodeHead>
Can I say one thing before I have to leave?

.Gordie>
Please do.

.CodeHead>
Unfortunately, folks, it all boils down to one thing software users have to police themselves. Most Atari companies simply don't have the resources to prosecute a civil case effectively, and the officials just aren't interested in small cases, which is how they perceive the Atari software scene. "Small-time." Them's the facts. So it comes down to each person making the decision, for him or herself not to steal

software, not to destroy the fruits of others' labors, and instead to choose an ethical way of existing. <grin> Hope that wasn't too heavy, but it's true. I have to run along, folks, see you later. ga

PENDZICH>
The world would be a nice place if it was a nice place eh?

.Gordie>
Thanks, Charles. Sometimes the truth isn't very pretty.

.AP7>
Do we have the stomach, collectively, to use the mirror principle? Do we have the b*lls to tell a software pirate that we do not like what he is doing, and know what he is doing, and to RESIST? Do we take ourselves more seriously than the software pirates take us? And if we do, why aren't they taking the honest ones of us seriously? ga

.Gordie>
Gordon, did your research touch on that at all?

.GRM>
I agree with Charles' point about the users needing to police themselves, and doing the ethical thing. However I think you'll also find that the "officials" aren't interested in software piracy, at all, regardless of platform. You'll very rarely, if ever, hear of a heavy bust for software piracy at the pirate bbs/user group level. It's up to us, make that _you_, and we can't wait for the "officials" to step in and do something about it, we must do it ourselves. As for your question Gordie...

Sometimes it is a matter of culture, the support for a pirate, in terms of culture, is fairly strong. As it takes a committment to enter a pirate bbs community (by not being a file leech, etc), it isn't something that one might be likely to just walk away from on a whim, or because somebody told them "you shouldn't do that". The nature of the bbs medium makes it easy, once the decision is made, to leave the community, but convincing the user that they should is the tough part. GA

.Gordie>
I think that's probably the essential point of it all. How do we convince users to 'go straight' and stop pirating. I think it's a matter of education, but even then, there will always be some who are incorrigible.

.AP7>
There is a saying that darkness flees light. It is my humble opinion that a lot could be done merely by openly and publicly facing the "problem".

.Gordie>
But only if the light is strong enough. If the threat of exposure doesn't carry any punishment, is it really a threat?

.AP7>
...and I bet not a single pirate will have the b*lls to sue because I called him a pirate, if he knows that I have PROOF!

.GRM>
I would guess that the key is to approach this as a peer problem.

The old folk wisdom about "peer pressure" has some basis in fact.

.Gordie>
I think it’s far stronger than most realize.

.AP7>
Peer pressure, yes, but you all know, that "bad guys", no matter how tough, wanna be bad guys with other bad guys, not with the public in general.

.GRM>
But AP7, consider the ethics of how you obtain that "proof" as well. Pirate boards are private systems.

.Gordie>
AP7, my question is whether a pirate really cares about being branded as such. Within the pirate community, they will still have status. Perhaps even enhanced status because they took the heat.

.GRM>
Gordie - a substantial body of sociological/criminological work would say that comments from non-pirates (non peers) will have no affect.

.AP7>
If it is open to the public, what makes it sacrosanct?

.AP7>
Some will not [care about being branded a pirate], but I know for sure that one Club Secretary that sold me Calamus for $100 produced by the pirate was not too happy... I am willing to be a mole. I would be a double agent, if I knew it would help.

.GRM>
AP7 - you seem to be talking about the level of user group piracy, my ethics comment was directed at being a mole on private pirate boards. In order to obtain access you must provide pirated software in almost all cases.

.AP7>
And, yes a few diehards would be actually raised in their "status". But if enough stink was raised for long enough, perhaps said Pirate would make Inside Edition, and nationwide exposure. I would need to be working with a developer before I would be a mole or "double agent". Using an altered copy of a program that could be traced. Hopefully with a cleverly concealed self destruct button, activated by a pseudo virus.

.Gordie>
Let’s try to maintain some sense of reality here. No law enforcement organization will be interested in spending the money necessary to run down an ST pirate. They just don’t have the funds. Yes, it’s a sad commentary on our system of criminal enforcement, but it’s the reality none the less.

.GRM>
One thing that hasn’t been mentioned is how focusing on piracy in the ST market may actually hurt things as much as the piracy itself by scaring away new developers and adding to the disgust of current ones. I doubt we really have it any worse, percentage wise, then other platforms. We’re just such an "elite" (small) user base.

.Gordie>
There’s a lot to be said for that comment, Gordon. How many new developers would be willing to risk their efforts to go into these so-called pirate infested waters? Not many, even if the allegations aren’t true.

.Gordie>
Quentin, any comments on what MicroProse thinks? Or on what you personally think?

MICROPROSE>
MicroProse basically believes that it’s up to each user to make the decision and realize that Piracy directly affects sales. And with no sales, no support for that platform.

.Gordie>
Would you say that higher prices are, in part, a product of piracy?

MICROPROSE>
I would have to say yes. As more time is needed to develop the code for some sort of protection as well as the testing involved. ga

.Gordie>
As well as affecting the return on the development investment. A software publisher needs to sell a certain number of copies to make back what they’ve spent in developing something. If that number is reduced due to piracy, then obviously the per copy price has to be higher, to make up the difference. ga

MICROPROSE>
Yes, the money from a product also pays for future projects and if there is no return on the previous game, then after awhile, that platform will have no more funds and personel will be assigned where the profit is.

.Gordie>
Sounds like we might all know of a platform that falls into that scenario.

.Bob>
Because of bad expereinces with certain (not Atari) software, I prefer to use backup copies of everything, but all of my Atari software is legal. Some manufacturers are not very cooperative about supplying backup copies when the original is OK, but I feel better with a backup. Comments? ga

.Gordie>
I imagine they see it as providing a ’pass along’ copy, and don’t want to make it too easy. ga

.GRM>
You’re legally entitled to a backup copy, and I imagine most companies expect you to make one yourself rather than supply you with one. It’s been a while since I’ve seen something that can’t be backed up at all. GA

.Bob>
Yes, but I can’t make copies of some of them. ga

.Gordie>

Dungeon Master being one, as an example. ga

.GRM>
Hmmm, I guess there are some that defy all copy programs. You're right, that's a tough boat to be in.

Another factor here, and I'm not trying to be an apologist for the ST market, is that not all developers are giving me what I want to buy. I haven't bought but a couple games this year because I don't play games too much, and how many flight simulators do I need?! Thus, some software company is missing sales to an active ST supporter, me!, not due to piracy but due to not meeting my needs as a user.

However, it probably looks like there aren't any ST users left so they don't bother with the innovative software that would attract my dollar. But sometimes I so want to see continued support for the ST that I'll feel like I should buy something I may not totally want just to encourage their efforts. Sort of silly, eh? GA

.Bob>
Same here. ga

.Gordie>
Not silly at all. I have that same inclination sometimes. But I'd like to send a signal to a domestic company, if possible, and they just don't exist. ga

.GRM>
I normally send the UK registration card to the US branch of the company and let them know they lost a sale by not supplying a US version. GA

.Gordie>
That's a nice touch. I'll have to try it.

It's getting late, so I think I'll wind this up for tonight, if that's okay with everyone else.

.GRM>
It's been enjoyable, thanks for hosting Gordie!

.Gordie>
I know we haven't definitively covered the subject, but I think we made some good points, and hopefully, will stir up some discussion in the community at large.

That said, this CO is officially ended!

++

Afterwards, several of us continued to chat, and the following comments were made concerning piracy via modem.

"About 3 years ago a local user bought a referb'd USR 9600. He said that when he called any BBS that listed 9600, that the sysop would almost immediately come online and chat, asking if he operated a BBS. When he answered no, the sysop would upgrade him online and then point him to the d/l section. I saw file listings of unreleased games and other stuff 3 or 4 months before I would see them listed for sale in the magazines. The 9600 was the key to opening the door on the pirate BBSs a few years ago.

At the same time, a local was running a FoReM BBS and he wrote a simple card game to run a door. After distributing this to several other BBSs, he was accepted into their pirate network. He would show me lists and disks with all kinds of goodies on them. So, I know how rampant software\ pirating is/was."

I included that bit of commentary as a point of information. I do not mean to imply that everyone with a 9600 baud modem or bbs is a pirate. But it does point out that there is far more than casual copying going on, even now, with the ST market as diminished as it is. Perhaps the damage is done, and we will never recover from it. I certainly hope that isn't the case. But, I do know that we, each and every one of us, must make a committment to stop stealing software.

It's not an especially difficult concept to understand. If you didn't buy it, and it wasn't a gift, it's stolen. Someone who spent a lot of time and effort creating it isn't being compensated for their work. That someone is a real person somewhere, probably a lot like yourself. Someone with bills to pay. Maybe a family to take care of. Someone who tried to get ahead in this world. And you have hurt that person. Piracy isn't something to be proud of. It's something to be ashamed of.

Ongoing discussion of software piracy continues to be important. We, as honest ST users, must find a way to stop the dishonest from destroying what little we have left. The key is education. If you find your child has pirated software, you must educate him or her about why it's wrong. If you find a fellow ST user pirating software, you must educate him or her about why it's wrong. If you have pirated software, consider what you have done, and continue to do. Delete those files or format those disks. Buy the programs you really like, and get along without the rest. You'll feel better, knowing that you have done the right thing. And knowing that you've done your part in keeping the ST alive.

++

Editorial comments by Gordie Meyer <BIBLINSKI>
They are his comments and not necessarily those of DELPHI
The ST Advantage, his user group, nor anyone else.
But he hopes he's not alone.

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The ST Assembly Language Workshop, Volume 1 comes with a disk containing all sample programs and assorted additional files. It is priced at $24.95, plus $3 shipping and handling and can be ordered at the address or phone number above. Visa and MasterCard are accepted.

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> TAF SHOW STR SHOW NEWS April 4-5,1992, Toronto, Canada

The Third CANADIAN ATARI USERS CONVENTION

CAUC V.3

On April 4th and 5th, 1992, ATARI CANADA and the TORONTO ATARI FEDERATION (TAF) will host what may be the most exciting Atari event in North America in 1992. To be held at the Skyline Hotel, the 1992 Canadian Atari Users Convention will feature the most outstanding developers in the Atari world with some of the latest programs and program updates. Local dealers will exhibit the latest hardware and peripherals, and user groups from across Canada and the United States will be on hand to share Public Domain and Shareware programs and exchange knowledge. Door prizes

throughout both days of the show, special show prices and several major door prize packages will add to the excitement.

Facilities will include a 15,000 square foot convention area, an additional 7,000 square foot display and exhibit space, and seven different meeting rooms that will host a wide range of seminars, demonstrations and mini- concerts. On Saturday evening, a formal banquet will bring together local users with major figures in the present and future course of Atari.

This is the third major convention that the Toronto Atari Federation has hosted in recent years. As one of the largest user groups in Canada, if not in North America, TAF has consistently helped bring the best and most contemporary computer technology to Toronto users. With membership of approximately 300, TAF will provide the core of volunteers that make an event like this possible. However, other user groups will also be invited to participate, to help stimulate exchange of information among the various Atari groups in this region and to help broaden the base of support for this special event.

Atari Canada General Manager Geoff Earle has said that this April event could easily surpass the recent Chicago convention, both in attendance and participation by developers and programmers. Basing their participation on the successful Chicago model, Atari Canada will assume many of the initial costs, including facilities and advertising. TAF will coordinate activities and provide volunteer help. TAF President John R. Sheehan, SJ, noted, "The enthusiasm of our members is the reason we felt this was a good time for a show. So many members had been asking about a show, and volunteering to help, that we felt we really could present a spectacular two-day event. We couldn’t try it without our volunteers, but with their help, this April will see the most exciting Atari show Toronto has ever seen!"

Packets for dealers and developers are being prepared and should be mailed in January. Information packets for user groups will be available at around the same time. The Skyline Hotel will be offering special room rates to participants, and special travel plans should also be announced shortly. To be placed on the mailing list for Convention information, please send your name, address, and affiliation (developer, user group, dealer, etc.) to TAF’s mailing address:

Toronto Atari Federation
5334 Yonge St., Suite 1527,
Willowdale, Ontario, CANADA
M2N 6M2

> STReport’s Editorial Page "Saying it like it is."

From the Editor’s Desk

Some folks have recently received their copies of AtariUser and read the "Year in Review" by J. Nagy. I did and by golly it was very well written and did indeed pull no punches. Congratulations John, is was indeed a very good article. Atari has exhibited some mighty strange

behavioral patterns over the last four years, of this there can be no doubt, yet they continue to tell they are trying to improve, to better things and most of all get new product to market on time. This is January 1992, and as time marches on.... we shall see.

This week, the news of Greg Pratt, the guy who gave the most inspiring speech about Atari this year at the Chicago Atarifest, has, according to Atari's B. Rehbock, resigned! Shades of DeJa Vu.... History repeats itself in the JAWS OF THE REVOLVING DOOR. Where... where will it all lead to? Who knows? The most important lesson to be learned here is you can have the most learned men and women in the industry working for a company but that alone will not make the company a bustling success. There must be other factors involved. For example there should be a full teamwork atmosphere prevailing at all times, there never should be internal jousting for the favor of the boss, the boss(s) should be cooperative and work with the teams, the boss(s) should never play the heavy. These are but a few of the "secrets of success" often found at work in the "other" company. The most important aspect is; those involved directly with the enhancement of the company and it image should never get involved in any type of politics nor should they ever place themselves in situations where their intentions should be looked upon as "questionable".

As we embark on the journey through this New Year, 1992, lets all hope Atari finally "gets with the program" and devotes all its energies to the manufacture and delivery of product instead of being the "showmasters, (leave that to PT Barnum & Ringling Bros.), political strategists and 'go betweens'. Atari's primary and only concern should be the making and selling of its products. In other areas, there seems to be a definate "revival" of sorts going on. In the online scene, there are strong indications of the "action" picking up. GEnie, as always throbs and hums with activity. On Delphi, the message flow is on the upswing. On CIS in the ST Fora the international action has also taken a definate upswing. Users are out there Atari... Show them you are too.

Thank you for your support!

Ralph.....

From the Guest Editor's Desk

Atari & Politics

by Dana P. Jacobson

PART I

Two weeks into the New Year, and already we're seeing some controversy online! Now I know why American Indians never trusted the white eyes; he _did_ speak with forked tongue. Apparently the "custom" still exists among all walks of life today. I thought that 1992 was going to be different; and we'd all be starting out with a new and positive outlook. All of those "peace offerings" didn't even make it past New Year's Day!! Since most of this emanated publicly in the FNET, let's

elaborate and see what _you_ think.

Actually, there are a few things that have bothered me over the last few months, but since very little came out in the public, I just filed them on the back burner to see if my thoughts would become a reality - they did.

A few months ago, I believe it was at WAACE, I was standing with a few people who were discussing the FNET. The usual BBS stuff, SysOps' attitudes, users, etc. Someone, I don't recall who, mentioned that a new FNET BBS was going to open soon. It was going to be run by Bob Brodie! There were quite a number of surprised faces, myself included. One of the comments that came from many of us was when would Bob find the time in his busy schedule to manage a BBS? Alright, so maybe Bob has more than 24 hours in his day, so he'd manage. It was an interesting tidbit of news. I actually thought that it was a good idea, as it would probably save him a lot of online time as he could log on at his leisure and answer messages. You also never get a busy signal calling your own BBS! What did surprise a lot of us was the proposed name of the BBS. I know, what does a name have to do with anything. Alright, maybe not the name, but the name signified an affiliation. Of course, the name of the BBS is Z*NET Golden Gate. I knew right away that this was going to be a mistake and cause some problems down the line, somehow.

So what's the problem? Am I upset that the BBS is not named ST Report Golden Gate? Nope, that would be a problem as well; and we all know that the river Styx will never freeze! The problem lies in the fact that Bob Brodie has a major role with Atari; he's the Director of Communications. This is not some schlep position, folks. I would surmise that the official Atari Corporation letterhead lists Bob among its hierarchy, somewhere in the top 10. He's a public figure, so what is he doing making himself "officially" affiliated with an Atari-specific online magazine? The BBS is even listed in Z*NET's masthead as one of Z*NET's "official" support boards! Somehow, this screams conflict of interest to me. Is it just me, or do others feel that Atari personnel, at _least_ those in high levels, should maintain a neutral stance?

It's one thing to say publicly that you prefer one magazine over another. But, to be publicly, or privately for that matter, affiliated with one is utterly wrong. I know that there are many readers right now thinking that my complaint is just another of those online magazine "wars", but it's not. I'd be making the same statements if Bob started up a BBS called SoftLogik Golden Gate, or any other name connected with an Atari support organization. I think it would be a very prudent decision for both Z*NET and Bob Brodie to divorce themselves from this "connection".

By all means, if Bob wants to run a BBS, go for it. Have a Z*NET conference area, I see no problem with that. But, it would also be wise to also include the ST Report conference as well. Am I, as an ST Report editor, unrealistic or unfair for making that suggestion? The answer is no. I, like Bob, run a BBS of my own. I write for STReport, I prefer ST Report, I read ST Report. I also read Z*NET and it's available regularly for my users along with ST Report. In fact, each of the magazines usually are provided one right after the other in my board's download area.

So yes, I believe that my "Atari in politics" statement is true. Atari is in the business of making computers. It's not in the business of promoting one supporter over another, in any type of official or "unofficial" affiliation.

"""

> STR Mail Call "...a place for folks to be heard"
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STReport's MailBag
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From GEnie Atari RT
Category 18, Topic 20
Message 132 Mon Jan 06, 1992
JMGSOFT [George @ JMG] at 05:02 EST

I've started catching up on Genie in general again, and happened upon this topic... I thought I'd make a few points.

First, Jim Allen mentioned his usual "Atari would not have even made it in Europe if PC and Mac hadn't been overpriced for many years" (paraphrased).

I have a disagreement with that because Atari had (and in many cases still has) technological advantages the PC, especially the PC of 1985-1987. Even advantages over the early Mac designs, a machine that was still sold in 128K RAM versions when the Atari was first released. (And remember how to upgrade early macs? trade in the whole motherboard.)

Even aging, oft criticized TOS/GEM is still superior to the OS software on the PC platform. MS-DOS is still a 640K limited, real-mode dog of an OS, and Windows is slow, kludgy and until just recently has had a software base that makes the Atari's look gigantic in comparison. Compare the speed of Pagemaker or Ventura on a PC to Calamus or Pagestream on an Atari (even an old 68000 Atari) and you'll see the difference. Sure the PC now has "Super VGA" with 1024 by 768 with 256 colours as a standard, but almost no programs use such modes (and those that do run very sloooooow).

But now things are more and more at a crossroads as hardware technology is blazing ahead in both PC and Mac arenas; I think Europe is the most critical for Atari, because if they release a truly powerful machine there then it will once again regain ground lost to other platforms. In Europe the general computer market is not biased to the letters "IBM" as they are here in North America. And with a truly powerful, leading edge system, people in North America will notice too (though it's hard to tell to what extent). The original Atari was designed in 1984 and from idea to store shelves took less than a year, and that included design and manufacture of five custom ICs. That allowed Atari to get a truly leading edge machine out to the market (before the market marched past it). If Atari can't do that with new product, it will never get back to the share of market it once had, and it will never have truly leading edge technology available.

Or to be more blunt, if this "falcon" machine isn't made available (that means for sale and past FCC) before the end of 1992, and doesn't have all the hum-dinger features expected, then people outside of the Atari community simply will not care much.

-- George.

PS - to N.Steel; I'm not sure about prices in the US, but prices on Atari equipment here in Canada are actually below (by about 20%) the prices you listed in a message about two weeks ago of prices that you'd like to see from Atari today. And as you suggested, Atari Canada uses the 1040STE as the entry-level machine, no 520STE is available.

Category 14, Topic 3
Message 239 Tue Jan 07, 1992
A.FASOLDT [Al Fasoldt] at 20:22 EST

Anthony,

I guess I am so used to the 256-color graphics on my PC that I assumed that 640X480X256 was VGA and that 800X600 was Super VGA.

I meant, of course, that the TT does not have 640X480X256.

And, yes, you are right, the mono display of the TT is great. But monochrome is not color no matter how you justify it.

Lloyd (and others),

Thanks for the ST sales info. Based on the number of readers of my syndicated column who have told me they don't use their STs any more, I'd guess that there is quite a "doorstop" quotient to the ST sales figures, at least in the U.S.

Add to that the shortage of dealers, and we may be in danger of finding ourselves orphaned even while Atari is still in business. I know that my fellow ST users in my part of the country (central New York) feel that the phrase "your local dealer" is an insult, since that establishment dropped the line about three years ago. And Amigas are readily available.

Al

Steve Johnson,

You've raised some good points. Atari is not a force of any kind in the mainstream U.S. computer market, and that is not because of the quality of the computer but the disinterest shown by Atari itself. What worries me as an enthusiastic ST user since '85 is the dead-end nature of ST and TT computing -- despite the valiant efforts of the Codeheads and Dave Small and Gribnif and a few others. I heard Bob Brodie, in person, say that the deal with GE servicing was in the last stages of being worked out, but of course it hasn't happened yet, and probably won't (or it would have by now; let's be realistic about these things).

The ST/TT market in the U.S. is so small that it could disappear without causing a blip on the economic meter. Companies such as ICD and Supra now depend on the Amiga market to make enough money so that they can stay in the ST/TT market.

The ST and TT are *wonderful* computers. But that won't keep them in the marketplace. At a time when a 40 mHz '386 system sells for a lot less than a TT, I think a lot of ST owners are facing hard choices when they want to

upgrade. If the TT had an industry-standard graphics display -- *any* industry standard would do, for Pete's sake -- and if the TT had a real SCSI port, and if the TT had ... well, basically, if they TT had some support from Atari itself as well as from third-party developers, it *might* be an attractive upgrade for ST owners. And here's an odd thing. If the Gemulator actually reaches production, there may well be more Gemulated STs within a few years than real STs, at least around here. I'd love to be able to run an "ST" inside a Win3 window or a GeoWorks window. I bet others would, too.

Al

Oh, and one more thing: The only reason any company refuses to disclose sales information is when (surprise!) sales are lower than outsiders have predicted or expected. Without any advertising to speak of, the ST couldn't have sold more than a few hundred thousand in the U.S., and if half of those STs are now unused or tossed out, we have a very weak market in the U.S. of A. If, as I suspect, two-thirds of those STs are not in use any more, we may even rank right down there with the Adam and the TI 4/A. It's dismal.

Al

STReport Online Magazine
Att: R.F. Mariano
PO Box 6672
Jacksonville, FL 32205

At the recent Chicago Computerfest by Atari Show in November 1991, I was the person lucky enough top have won the 105mb Hard Drive you donated. I would like to thank you for your donation. I am the ST Librarian for MilAtari Ltd., the Milwaukee Atari User's Group. I appreciate having won this, as I am using it daily in connection with my duties as librarian. In this job, more hard drive space is always needed, as I am sure you can appreciate. I find that the drive is very fast and quiet, two qualities that arehighly valued by me, as is the autoparking feature of the drive. Again, thank you for your contribution.

Sincerely,

Dennis Wilson

"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

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* "Rumors - Tidbits - Predictions - Observations - Hot Tips" *

Seems the "IDES" are restless and its not even March yest. Well CES happened and where was Atari? In an off the main drag one night stop for cocktails and fruit cups for Lynx folks. Apple made a big deal here with a speech delivered by their ’main man’. One rumor heard all over the place was that Atari might be ’for sale’. There is another US magazine in the makings, seems there was a split-off from a familiar existing newspaper style magazine. Hmmm, seems there may be some real infighting about to occur over the recently vacated responsibilities. Rumor also has it that there are less than 120 employees with Atari worlwide. On the humorous side, it seems the crayons "melted" so that deal will be further delayed, but then who cares? Its a situation whose time has come and gone. How many authorized dealers left in the USA? Ziggy sez less than 20!

Until next time...

Ziggy Zircon
The Zigster!

> A "Quotable Quote" STReport's Editorial Cartoon
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